

HIGHER EDUCATION FACILITY PRESERVATION STUDY: MAINTENANCE, REPAIR, AND RENEWAL MANAGEMENT AND BUDGETING

SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES

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STATE OF WASHINGTON
JOINT LEGISLATIVE AUDIT AND
REVIEW COMMITTEE

STUDY TEAM

Karl Herzog
Larry Brubaker
Stephanie Hoffman

LEGISLATIVE AUDITOR

TOM SYKES

Joint Legislative Audit & Review Committee
506 16th Avenue SE
Olympia, WA 98501-2323
(360) 786-5171
(360) 786-5180 Fax
Website: <http://jlarc.leg.wa.gov>
e-mail: neff_ba@leg.wa.gov

BACKGROUND

Washington's public higher education facilities cover over 43 million square feet of space, constituting approximately two-thirds of all state facilities. These state assets, representing a significant investment of public funds, are located at over 200 sites and managed by 40 separate institutions. Ongoing investment in a variety of maintenance, repair, and renewal activities is necessary to ensure that these assets are preserved, that facility-related health and safety requirements and education and research needs are met, and that facility life-cycle costs are minimized.

Little information is available to the Legislature, Governor, and state Higher Education Coordinating Board to gauge the overall condition of higher education facilities, the adequacy of maintenance and repair management activities and expenditures, and the magnitude and severity of preservation backlogs. The 2001-03 state capital budget provides funding and direction to the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee (JLARC) to conduct a study of higher education facility conditions, maintenance, repair, and renewal. A final report is due to the Legislature by September 15, 2002.

PROPOSED STUDY SCOPE

The JLARC Higher Education Facility Preservation Study will examine the condition, maintenance, repair, and renewal of state higher education facilities, including those within the six baccalaureate institutions and the community and technical college system. The study will produce information about higher education facility preservation that can be applied during the 2003-05 legislative budgeting process, as well as explore a framework for ongoing preservation reporting, management, and budgeting.

PROPOSED STUDY OBJECTIVES

1. Describe and assess the current and historic management and budgeting for higher education facility preservation, maintenance, repair, and renewal projects and activities.
2. Describe and assess the age, type, and condition of state higher education facilities on a comparable, state-wide basis.
3. Describe and assess the magnitude of preservation backlogs on a comparable, state-wide basis.
4. Identify, and assess the severity of, any health and safety, program delivery, and life-cycle cost issues and risks associated with facility conditions and preservation backlogs.
5. Recommend improvements to higher education facility preservation reporting, management, and budgeting to ensure both prudent stewardship of these facilities and the ongoing availability of complete, reliable, and comparable facility preservation information across Washington's public higher education institutions.

PROPOSED ADVISORY AND TECHNICAL GROUPS

- **Legislative Advisory Group** made up of interested legislators from JLARC, fiscal committees, and relevant policy committees, as well as committee and caucus staff. The first meeting is scheduled from 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon, November 14, 2001, at the SeaTac Holiday Inn.
- **Technical Review Panel** made up of staff from the Office of Financial Management (OFM), the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB), the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC), and individual baccalaureate institutions. The first meeting is scheduled from 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m., November 27, 2001, at the SeaTac Holiday Inn.

OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED STUDY APPROACH

- The study approach recognizes that the Legislature, Governor, and HECB have expressed a need for more complete preservation information that is reliable and comparable across institutions. It also recognizes that individual institutions have generally developed their own management and budgeting approaches to facility preservation, while requesting state funding to address their facility preservation priorities.
- Rather than assuming that institutions' existing condition assessment and preservation management approaches need to be modified or supplanted by a uniform system, JLARC will attempt to construct, in consultation with the technical review panel and with assistance from facility preservation consultant(s), methods to translate and cross-walk existing preservation information produced and maintained by each of the institutions into a **comparable framework**.
- JLARC will engage appropriate facilities preservation consultant(s) to work in collaboration with JLARC and higher education agency staff to translate existing preservation information into this comparable framework. Consultant(s) will also assist JLARC in verifying preservation information maintained by individual institutions on a sample basis.
- This proposed comparable framework will be designed to include the key information identified in proposed study objectives 2, 3, and 4, and will be available for the 2003-05 legislative budgeting process. If, as the study progresses, we find that translation is not possible for some institutions or will leave too many missing gaps, then at that time we will more explicitly address potential changes to institutions' underlying methodologies and systems.
- In addition to the framework, JLARC will prepare several workpapers exploring relevant aspects of facility preservation management and budgeting. Examples will include: existing condition assessment, preservation management, and budgeting methodologies used by the SBCTC and individual institutions; the current and historic policy and budget context surrounding higher education facility preservation; and preservation approaches in other states. These workpapers will be generated for technical review by legislative staff, OFM, HECB, SBCTC, and the higher education institutions as they are developed.

JLARC STAFF CONTACT FOR THE STUDY

Karl Herzog	(360) 786-5185	herzog_ka@leg.wa.gov
Larry Brubaker	(360) 786-5178	brubaker_la@leg.wa.gov
Stephanie Hoffman	(360) 786-5176	hoffman_st@leg.wa.gov

